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INFO SAL 01, GPM 03, SC 01, RSC 01, USIA 12, H 02, NSC 10, L 03, INR 07, P 00
CIA 04, DOD 01, SP 02, SS 20, IO 21, EUR 25, AID 30, NSAE 00, RSR 01,
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R 181030Z OCT 67
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9079
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
CINCPAC FOR POLAD
AMCONSUL DANANG
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
STAF GRNC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SAIGON 8866

SUBJ: LOWER HOUSE ELECTIONS: KHANH HOA

REF: SAIGON 6824

1. REFTEL REPORTED BASIC BIOGRAPHIC DATA ON THE 44 CANDIDATES WHO INITIALLY FILED FOR THE 6 LOWER HOUSE SEATS AT STAKE IN KHANH HOA. THIRTY CANDIDATES REMAIN IN THE RACE AS OF OCTOBER 14. AMONG THE TOP CONTENDERS ARE NGUYEN DINH LY AND NGUYEN VAN CHUYEN, BOTH BACKED BY THE CATHOLIC CITIZENS BLOC, AND LE BA CHAN, A BUDDHIST LAYMAN EXPECTED TO RECEIVE STRONG SUPPORT

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FROM THE PROVINCIAL UNITED BUDDHIST ASSOCIATION. THE FOLLOWING 14 CANDIDATES HAVE WITHDRAWN OR WERE DIS-

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QUALIFIED.

LE DINH PHUOC;
TRAN PHUNG, WITHDREW;
VUONG TICH LONG, DISQUALIFIED FOR HAVING BEEN SENTENCED FOR A MINOR OFFENSE; APPEALED TO CEC AND LOST;
TRAN DAC LAN;
NGUYEN THANH BINH;
DINH PHAC HIEU;
TO DAM, WITHDREW (SEE BELOW);
NGO MINH DUC;
NGUYEN NGOC TRAN, DISQUALIFIED FOR INSUFFICIENT DOCUMENTATION; APPEALED TO CEC AND LOST;
LE HUU DE (NOT LE HUU MO AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED);
HA TRUNG AM;
NUYNH HUU BAN, WITHDREW;
VU DINH LONG; WITHDREW;
NGUYEN DUC MAN, DISQUALIFIED FOR SUBMITTING DOCUMENTS LATE, APPEALED TO CEC AND LOST.

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2. TO DAM, THE VICE CHAIRMAN AND OFFICIAL CANDIDATE OF THE KHANH HOA CVT LABOR ORGANIZATION, WITHDREW OCTOBER 3 IN PROTEST AFTER THE LOCAL CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE DENIED HIM THE USE OF THE CVT "WATER BUFFALO" SYMBOL. THE CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE AT THE INSTIGATION OF ITS CHAIRMAN, NAVAL CAPTAIN NGUYEN DINH DIEU, RULED THAT DAM'S CVT SYMBOL RESEMBLED TOO CLOSELY THE WATER BUFFALO INSIGNIA THAT CANDIDATE NGUYEN VAN CHUYEN HAD ALREADY SUBMITTED. RATHER THAN ABANDON THE UNION SYMBOL FOR ANOTHER, DAM WITHDREW FROM THE RACE. ON LEARNING OF THIS, A GROUP OF UNION MEMBERS MARCHED IN PROTEST ON THE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL OFFICE WHERE THE LOCAL CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE WAS MEETING AND SENT ITS MEMBERS INTO HASTY RETREAT. DAM WAS THOUGHT A STRONG CONTENDER ON THE BASIS OF UNION SUPPORT.

3. OF KHANH HOA'S THREE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY REPRE-

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SENTATIVES, ONLY ONE, DEFEATED SENATE CANDIDATE HOANG NGOC CAN, IS STILL IN THE RACE. HE WILL RECEIVE SOME BUDDHIST SUPPORT. VU DINH LONG WITHDREW AFTER

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THE SECOND POSTING. LONG'S FAILURE TO WIN A COMMITMENT FROM THE LOCAL BUDDHIST ORGANIZATION PROBABLY WAS THE MAIN FACTOR IN HIS DECISION.

4. MOST CONSPICUOUS BY HIS ABSENCE FROM THE LIST OF CANDIDATES IS PHAM KE TOAI, A CATHOLIC AND KHANH HOA'S THIRD CA REPRESENTATIVE WHO WON LAST YEAR, PRIMARILY ON THE STRENGTH OF CATHOLIC SUPPORT. THIS YEAR HE DID NOT FILE. TOAI GAINED THE ANTIPATHY OF THE KHANH HOA CATHOLIC CITIZENS BLOC (CCG) FOR HIS FAILURE TO SUPPORT THE INSERTION OF A "SUPREME BEING" CLAUSE IN THE CONSTITUTION. THIS COST HIM CCB ENDORSEMENT, LEAVING HIM, SO TO SPEAK, WITHOUT A PRAYER OF VICTORY.

5. A STRONG BID BY THE INFLUENTIAL PRO-THICH TRI QUANG KHANH HOA UNITED BUDDHIST ASSOCIATION TO ELECT THEIR FOLLOWERS IS PLAGUED BY A SUPER-BUNDANCE OF CANDIDATES VYING FOR OFFICIAL UBA BLESSING. APPARENTLY THREE OF THEM, HUE BORN CA REPRESENTATIVE FROM KHANH HOA HOANG NGOC CAN, AND LOCALS LE BA CHAN AND VO VAN THUAN, SOUGHT AND RECEIVED A RECOMMENDATION

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TO THE KHANH HOA UBA ORGANIZATION FROM THICH THIEN MINH. MINH, WHO WAS AT ONE TIME BASED IN NHA TRANG, IS NOW REPORTEDLY ONE OF THICH TRI QUANG'S PRINCIPAL LIEUTENANTS IN SAIGON. A FOURTH BUDDHIST CANDIDATE IS TON THAT CAN, WHO WAS REPORTEDLY WITH EMPEROR BAO DAI AT THE FRENCH UNION CONFERENCE IN PARIS BEFORE INDEPENDENCE. CAN HAS BEEN ENDORSED BY LONG TIME FRIEND THICH TRI THU, ANOTHER HIGH RANKING MONK

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IN TRI QUANG'S ENTOURAGE WHO IS PRESENTLY DIRECTOR OF THE BUDDHIST STUDY INSTITUTE IN NHA TRANG. THICH TRI NGHIEM, CHIEF OF THE UBA IN KHANH HOA, REPORTEDLY IS DISTRESSED AT FACT HE HAS FOUR CANDIDATES WITH RECOMMENDATIONS BY TWO HIGHLY PLACED BONZES, WITH ONLY THREE SEATS AT STAKE. NGHIEM IS SAID TO BE PERSONALLY UNWILLING TO CHOOSE AMONG THE FOUR AND THEREFORE DECIDED PROVINCIAL UBA WOULD OFFICIALLY ENDORSE NO ONE. THE FAILURE OF THE KHANH HOA UBA TO MAKE A CHOICE, PLUS THE PRESENCE IN THE CONTEST OF ANOTHER WELL-KNOWN THOUGH MORE MODERAT BUDDHIST CANDIDATE, PROVINCIAL COUNCIL-CHAIRMAN PHAM NHAC,

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COULD SO FRAGMENT THE BUDDHIST VOTE THAT NO MORE THAN ONE OF THE FIVE WILL WIN. NHA TRANG-BORN LE BA CHAN, LONG ACTIVE IN BUDDHIST LAY AFFAIRS AND CURRENTLY COMMISSIONER OF SOCIAL WELFARE IN THE KHANH HOA UBA, IS MOST LIKELY OF FIVE TO WIN. CHAN WAS DEPUTY PROVINCE CHIEF OF KHANH HOA FROM 1954-57 AND SINCE THEN HAS WORKED IN THE PROVINCIAL TAX AND TREASURY OFFICES.

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CIA 04 DOD 01 SP 02 SS 20 IO 21 EUR 25 AID 30 NSAE 00 RSR 01
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R 181030Z OCT 67
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SAIGON 2866

SUBJ: LOWER HOUSE ELECTIONS: KHANH HOA

REF: SAIGON 6884

6. THE CATHOLIC CITIZENS BLOC (CCB), WHICH CONTROLS NO MORE THAN 16,000 OF KHANH HOA'S 166,000 VOTERS, HAS DISPLAYED MORE POLITICAL ACUMEN THAN THE UBA BY LINING UP BEHIND ONLY TWO CANDIDATES: MAJOR NGUYEN VAN CHUYEN AND ARVN CAPTAIN NGUYEN DINH LY, M.D. BOTH HAVE GOOD PROSPECTS OF VICTORY. THE ONLY OTHER KNOWN CATHOLIC IN THE 30-MAN FIELD IS ELDERLY TEACHER TRAN XUAN NGUYEN, CHAIRMAN OF KHANH HOA'S CATHOLIC GREATER SOLIDARITY FORCES (FSF), BUT WHO WITHOUT CCB BACKING CANNOT BE CONSIDERED A SERIOUS

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CONTENDER. GSF NOT AS INFLUENTIAL IN KHANH HOA AS CCB). NGUYEN VAN CHUYEN, A NATIVE OF KHANH HOA, WAS ELECTED TO THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY IN 1966 FROM QUANG NGAI PROVINCE WHERE HE HAD BEEN CHIEF OF REVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENT. MORE RECENTLY CHUYEN REESTABLISHED HIMSELF IN KHANH HOA BY SERVING AS ASSISTANT CAMPAIGN REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE THIEU-KY TICKET. HE REPORTEDLY HAS GV SUPPORT.

7. NGUYEN VAN LY, IS AN ARVN DOCTOR WHOSE ONLY CONTACT WITH KHANH HOA WAS DUTY AT A MILITARY HOSPITAL IN NHA TRANG FROM 1962-65. HOWEVER, LY APPEARS TO BE THE FAVORITE OF THE PROVINCIAL CCB, MOST OF WHOSE LEADERSHIP IS, LIKE LY HIMSELF, FROM NGHE AN PROVINCE IN NORTH VIETNAM. LY ALSO HAS SUPPORT FROM THE KHANH HOA CENSUS GRIEVANCE CHIEF, NGUYEN THANH TIEN AND THE NON-MILITANT CU SON MON BUDDHIST SECT WHICH CLAIMS 10,000 FAITHFUL IN KHANH HOA.

8. OTHER POSSIBLE CONTENDERS ARE:

A. HANOI BORN CAPTAIN NGUYEN VAN DIEM, CHIEF

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OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL SECTION AT THE NAVAL ACADEMY IN NHA TRANG. CAPTAIN DIEM'S PRIMARY LOCUS OF SUPPORT IS THE KHANH HOA VETERANS ASSOCIATION.

B. NGUYEN DINH DIEU, 31 ORIGINALLY FROM NGHE AN AND ALSO A NAVAL CAPTAIN STATIONED IN NHA TRANG. SOME SAY DIEU HAS THE BACKING OF THIEU AND KY.

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